

test is not that the ear is at fault but that the association of the letters with the muscular movement of writing has not been made. Spelling must be committed not only to the eye or ear but to the hand. "Let any one watch himself in writing slowly, and he will perceive that the words flow from the pen under the suggestive influence of a series of mental images. He will either hear the words mentally recited, or he will see them mentally in print or writing. Let him write more rapidly, and these images fade to mere suggestions of themselves, yet some clew remains, by means of which an automatic series of muscle memories is aroused, and the hand is guided in the correct motion. Knowing that the muscle images are linked to eye and ear images, we trace the maintenance of the sense images to physiological retentiveness, and their origin to the act of perception; while we find the results of this act determined by the way in which the attention is directed and by the conditions of sensation."†

Even if English orthography were purely phonetic, mistakes in writing would still occur if continued practice were not given. Nor would, in this case, the argument for sight spelling entirely disappear. The eye would be subordinate to the ear, but visualization would still be a very important aid.

Oral spelling as a *final test of preparation* may be of little value, but as a *means of learning* it should not, I am convinced, be neglected, especially with young children. Oral spelling gives life and movement to a subject of little inherent interest, and in such a difficult matter as English orthography "the strongest possible complication of sensory elements" should be produced. Place yourself, as far as possible, in the position of the child. For you no combination of letters that spell a word is quite unfamiliar. Have a nonsense series of letters placed before you and observe yourself as you commit them to memory. You have learned to inhibit the motion of the lips, but do you not, unless you make an effort to check yourself, silently repeat, probably with slight motion of the head or tongue, the series? Even if you are sure you simply visualize, the question still remains, Is not pure visualization, like the inhibition

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† Miss Wyckhoff, *Constitutional Bad Spellers*, Pedagogical Seminary, vol. II, No. 3.